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Task Force Smith Revisited

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Half a century ago the US ignored a potential threat that still opposes us today. The Korean War is not over, and the United States is still taking casualties. This was America's first major UN operation, and since the end of the Cold War the number has increased many fold. An obvious question begs to be answered: Have we learned anything in the past fifty years?

"NO MORE Task Force *Smith*s." Former Army Chief of Staff General Gordon R. Sullivan outlined this battle cry for the Army of the 1990s. The tiny, ill-prepared and badly equipped force had put up a valiant but futile attempt to halt North Korean hordes in a war that broke out following the biggest drawdown in US history.[1]

Ironically, the number of divisions in the active Army—10—was the same when Sullivan retired as it was at the beginning of the Korean War in 1950. The division that prepared and deployed Task Force (TF) *Smith*, the 24th Infantry Division, was reflagged in the early 1990s but is now being reactivated, along with the 7th Infantry Division, as the Army adds two "cadre" divisions to the 10 active ones.[2] As the Army enters the year 2000 with units deployed in Bosnia and Kosovo, a decade after the end of the Cold War, and 50 years after the "limited war" in Korea, a heated debate continues over its proper organization, equipment, manning and role.

The traditional problems normally associated with military readiness—personnel, training and equipment shortfalls—that led to the disaster in Korea in 1950 seem to have been largely avoided today. While demands for further reductions in the budget and manpower have receded, the requirement for changes in the Army's roles and missions and the reality that manpower costs must be trimmed to pay for modernization are not likely to go away anytime soon. As General Eric K. Shinseki takes over the leadership of the Army, valuable lessons from TF *Smith* merit re-examination.[3] The Army's duties and missions in Japan during the occupation have parallels to today's missions in Bosnia and Kosovo.

TF *Smith* is generally seen as a failure in tactical preparedness. However, for long-term US national security, the occupation of Japan arguably was a great success since Japan remains our key Asian ally today. Army leaders face parallel situations and choices today in building and maintaining the land component of the world's only superpower with national interests around the world.

The Army must be prepared to "fight and win the nation's wars," but it also must be able to conduct other missions in support of this nation's national security objectives.[4] The real debate over the future role of the Army should not concern whether to prepare for warfighting or for military operations other than war (MOOTW) or stability and support operations (SASO) activities. The deliberations and decisions must address how to man, train, equip, organize and plan all the missions assigned by the National Command Authorities (NCA). In reevaluating TF *Smith*, this article briefly reviews not only the personnel, training and equipment elements of readiness, but also the strategic environment, the leadership and morale factors and the effects of the nontraditional missions conducted by the Army during the Occupation of Japan.

This evaluation must be done at all three levels—strategic (Washington, D.C.), operational (Tokyo and Seoul) and tactical (the occupation zone and battlefield). The US Army in the post-Cold War, post-*Desert Storm* era, as it was in the aftermath of World War II, is being required to conduct military duties in other than a war environment. The Army

US Army

Emperor Hirohito pays an unprecedented visit to Supreme Allied Commander Douglas MacArthur at the US Embassy in Tokyo, 27 September 1945.

The virtually complete and peaceful compliance with the terms of the surrender by the Japanese soon moved security worries to the background. MacArthur and his staff were quickly forced to make decisions that had significant long-term ramifications for Japan's future modernization and political development. The fate and future role of the emperor and the war crimes tribunals were the most visible and volatile topics, but issues related to caring for the basic needs of the people were also important in keeping Japan stable and peaceful.

has already been tasked to conduct or support unilateral, coalition and UN-led humanitarian, peace-enforcement, peacekeeping and peace-building operations in northern Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Bosnia and now Kosovo and East Timor.[5] The status and results of these operations are mixed and controversial. However, the military's role and performance in Japan and Korea after World War II were no less controversial at the time. The fact that there has not been an outbreak of a major conflict in either Korea or Taiwan suggests that the price of peace is US presence and patience.

This article looks at the occupation of Japan in the years preceding the Korean War, specifically addressing the strategic direction, military organization and leadership that formed, tasked and deployed TF *Smith* to Korea for action against the North Korean People's Army (NKPA). TF *Smith*, named for Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. (Brad) Smith, was the lead element of the 24th Infantry Division, Eighth United States Army, the first American combat unit introduced by General Douglas MacArthur into the "police action" in July 1950.

Roy K. Flint states, "the tactical defeats endured by the officers and men of the 24th Division were rooted in the failure of the Army—and not just the divisions in Japan—to prepare itself during peacetime for battle."[6] This article outlines the missions and duties of Army occupying units in Japan, discusses their readiness for war, traces actions of TF *Smith* in the opening days of the Korean War and reviews the resulting lessons. Most important, this article draws parallels between the Army of 1945-1950 and the Army of 1995-2000 and proposes some considerations and conclusions using some of the lessons from the Occupation of Japan and the combat operations of TF *Smith*.

The Occupation of Japan

On 28 August 1945, the first American soldiers deployed to the Japanese home islands to prepare for the arrival of occupation forces. MacArthur, designated Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), arrived on the 30th to implement the Basic Initial Post Surrender Directive.[7] This document called for the same type of humanitarian, nation-building and security operations that the Army is conducting today. The directive called on the SCAP (also the wider term for the entire headquarters) to demilitarize and democratize Japan. While a bit lengthy, the goals outlined in the text are most informative, especially when compared with UN mandates the Army has been asked to implement in current and recent operations:

"The ultimate objective of the United Nations with respect to Japan is to foster conditions which will give the greatest possible assurance that Japan will not again become a menace to the peace and security of the world and will permit her eventual admission as a responsible and peaceful member of the family of nations. Certain measures considered

to be essential for the achievement of this objective have been set forth in the Potsdam Declaration. These measures include, among others, the carrying out of the Cairo Declaration and the limiting of Japanese sovereignty to the four main islands and such minor islands as the Allied Powers determine; the abolition of militarism and ultranationalism in all their forms; the disarmament and demilitarization of Japan, with continuing control over Japan's capacity to make war; the strengthening of democratic tendencies and processes in governmental, economic, and social institutions and encouragement and support of liberal political tendencies in Japan. The United States desires that the Japanese Government conform as closely as may be to the principles of democratic self-government but it is not the responsibility of the occupation forces to impose on Japan any form of government not supported by the freely expressed will of the people."[8]

The guidelines and broad policies for the occupation of Europe and Japan had been agreed to by the major allies at the Cairo Conference of 1943. Military planners in Washington had been key members of a team studying postwar issues from the earliest days of the war. Key State Department personnel, military planners and regional experts began working on postwar planning in early 1942 in a more or less ad hoc manner. However, in early 1945, a State-War-Navy Coordination Committee (SWNCC) was formed and prepared interagency analysis and policy inputs for postwar Germany and Japan.[9] Why should interagency planning and cooperation be a contentious issue and lead to a separate Presidential Decision Directive, PDD-56, in 1998 when the historical precedents are obvious?

Despite the planning effort, at the time of the surrender considerable and continuing political debate swirled in Washington about the fate of Japan and America's role in the postwar world. Amid turmoil and conflicting guidance, MacArthur, no stranger to the politics of the Pacific, assumed wide latitude in interpreting his mandate. He immediately began to make his presence felt by implementing humanitarian relief efforts, caring for the thousands of Allied prisoners of war, demobilizing the Japanese military, conducting war crimes tribunals and organizing and putting into place a civil-military government. The task was immense, politically sensitive and dynamic.[10]

With the official unconditional surrender in early September, SCAP became responsible for a totally defeated nation that had suffered over 5 million casualties, with its major cities in ruins and its agricultural sector unable to feed the country. Japan contained a population of 74 million, many of whom needed housing and medical care. More than 5 million Japanese army and navy personnel, most outside the home islands, needed to be brought home. Additionally, more than one million Korean and Chinese soldiers and forced laborers had to be repatriated.[11]

The traditional problems normally associated with military readiness — personnel, training and equipment shortfalls — that led to the disaster in Korea in 1950 seem to have been largely avoided today. While demands for further reductions in the budget and manpower have receded, the requirement for changes in the Army's roles and missions and the reality that manpower costs must be trimmed to pay for modernization are not likely to go away anytime soon.

In addition, as the occupation began, MacArthur was the commander of over a half-million deployed American and Allied forces throughout the Far East. The reorganization, demobilization and orderly return of the servicemen to home nations significantly complicated the task at hand in Japan. US Army personnel, fresh from bloody, no-quarter-given combat against the Japanese were critical to providing humanitarian support, ensuring a pacified Japan and preparing to rebuild a nation. This was not a task the American units had been prepared and trained to undertake, nor were many of these combat veterans eager to stay in Japan now that the war was over.

But while there those men oversaw not only a program for ensuring Japan's military would not threaten peace, but also a sweeping program to remake Japan in America's image—a new, democratic, political order.[12] While the politicians in Washington and other Allied capitals argued over Japan's reparations, the fate of the Emperor and what Japan should look like in the future, SCAP immediately analyzed the task at hand and went to work.

SCAP endured conflicting messages from Washington and the frustrating and counterproductive role of the Russians, some of whom were part of MacArthur's Allied staff in Tokyo. The first phase of the occupation focused on security and demilitarization issues and the second on the political, economic and social changes mandated in broad goals by the Allies as interpreted by MacArthur and his staff.[13]

Actually, both phases occurred nearly simultaneously, with humanitarian and demilitarization tasks having initial primacy. However, the virtually complete and peaceful compliance with the terms of the surrender by the Japanese soon moved security worries to the background. MacArthur and his staff were quickly forced to make decisions that had significant long-term ramifications for the future modernization and political development of Japan. The fate and future role of the emperor and the war crimes tribunals were the most visible and volatile topics, but issues related to caring for the basic needs of the people were also important in keeping Japan stable and peaceful. Other decisions about implementing political and economic development policies, using the existing Japanese bureaucracy and future governmental structures were no less vexing. The predominate planners, decision makers and implementers were military officers, using guidance from Washington that was neither clear nor consistent.

It is also debated that the Army's most important shortcoming was the attitude of the leadership, civilian and military, and even of the soldiers, that war was not possible, especially a ground war, in the Atomic Age. With communist-inspired or supported insurgencies in Greece, Vietnam and Malaya, the recent defeat of the US-supported Nationalists in 1949 in China, and the further Soviet consolidation of Eastern Europe in the late l940s, the warning signs appear, in hindsight, to have been quite obvious.

Military staff officers played critical roles in interpreting policy and ensuring the implementation of directives for the postwar government. The demobilization of the Japanese army and navy, the destruction of war industries and equipment, the distribution of humanitarian supplies and repatriation of soldiers and workers were accomplished, for the most part, by the Japanese under US military direction. In addition, US Army personnel were directly involved in rewriting the constitution, instituting police and education reforms and planning for sweeping political, social and economic changes, including land reform, purging military and industrial leaders and forming labor unions.

Army combat units were deployed throughout the islands, actively patrolling to thwart illicit military training, arms caches, contraband and black-market activity. In addition, infantry units served as military police and constabulary to keep the peace and provide an American presence throughout the country.[14] However, the Japanese fanaticism for working with the Americans and implementing the peace more than equaled their fanaticism for war. The discipline among the Japanese people and the American soldiers has been widely characterized as miraculous. The "miracle" was military leadership, planning and organization, coupled with a studied understanding of the Japanese people and culture.

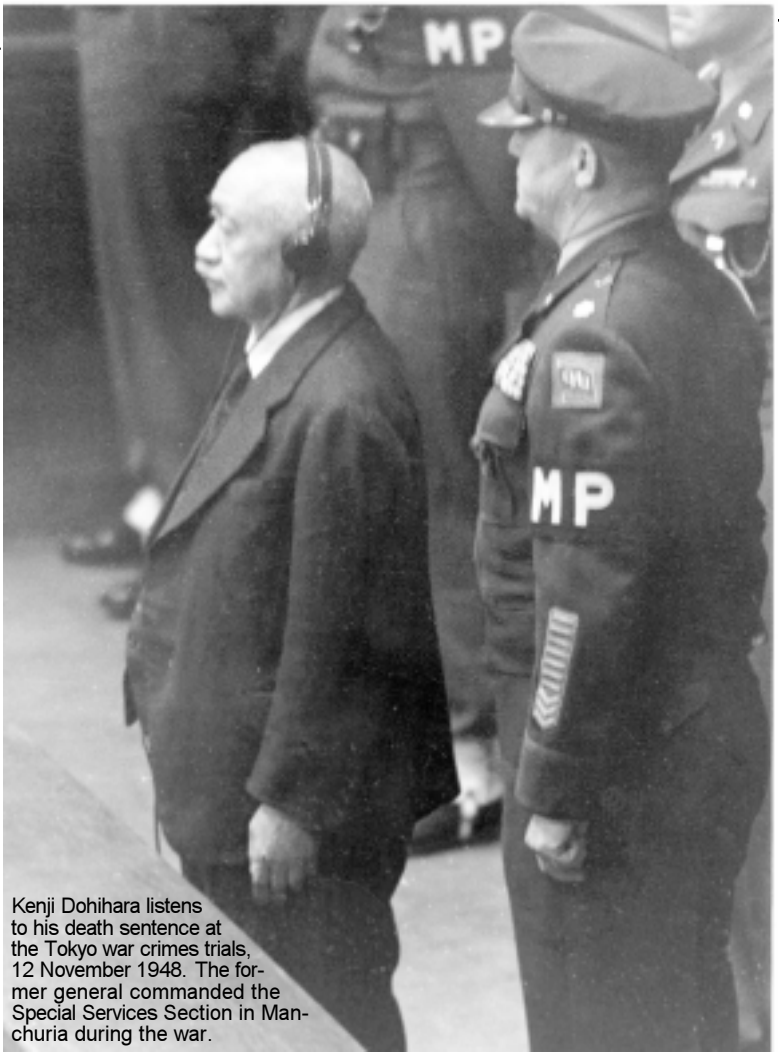
The initial occupation force of over 400,000 soldiers in the Sixth and Eighth US armies was clearly unnecessary given the attitude and actions of the Japanese people. In addition, the war-weary American people demanded the rapid return of their service personnel. The pace of the US demobilization quickly reduced the numbers of troops available for duty in the Far East. By early 1946, the Sixth Army was gone and the Eighth Army (EUSA) numbered under 200,000.[15] A standing Army of over 8 million at the end of World War II was reduced to 592,000 and 10 divisions by 1949. Four of these divisions, the 1st Cavalry, and the 7th, 24th and 25th Infantry divisions were part of the Occupation of Japan.[16] One of these occupation divisions, the 24th, would deploy the first American combat troops introduced into Korea.

The 24th Infantry Division

"They had to be told that this was a police action, and that they'd soon be home in Japan. It was a happy thought—life in Japan was very good. Almost every man had his own shoeshine boy and his own *musame*; in a country where an American lieutenant made as much as a cabinet minister, even a PFC could make out. And the training wasn't much."[17]

In 1949, the 24th Infantry Division was conducting its third year of occupation duties on the island of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands. The division had completed its move to this island directly across the Tsushima (Korea) Strait from the southern ports of the Republic of Korea in May 1946. Kyushu held the major naval base at Sasebo and the city of Nagasaki. There was little extra room for ranges and virtually no maneuver areas. After short deployments by the 2d Marine Division and the 32d Infantry Division, the 24th would become responsible for the entire island and conduct the full range of occupation duties until the outbreak of the Korean War.

US Army



Kenji Dohihara listens to his death sentence at the Tokyo war crimes trials, 12 November 1948. The former general commanded the Special Services Section in Manchuria during the war.

Amid turmoil and conflicting guidance, MacArthur, no stranger to the politics of the Pacific, assumed wide latitude in interpreting his mandate. He immediately began to make his presence felt by implementing humanitarian relief efforts, caring for the thousands of Allied prisoners of war, demobilizing the Japanese military, conducting war crimes tribunals and organizing and putting into place a civil-military government. The task was immense, politically sensitive and dynamic.

The 24th had officially assumed occupation responsibilities on the island on 16 June 1946 and handled minor disturbances related to fraternization and problems between the Japanese and not-yet repatriated Korean workers. The division also addressed easing food shortages among the Japanese, running military and civil courts and providing division interpreters to support rebuilding and construction activities.

Training and operations continued. The division patrolled extensively, conducted marksmanship training, reconnoitered locations for artillery ranges and set up a division school. The division also assumed the responsibility for a repatriation center. Plans were well along for providing clubs, Red Cross facilities, and improved recreation for the troops.[18] Kyushu was to be the home for the 24th Infantry Division for the foreseeable future.

SCAP Occupation Instruction Number 5, dated 1 October 1949, tasked the EUSA, the senior headquarters for all the Army divisions in Japan, with ensuring Japanese compliance with orders and instructions. These included encouraging the development of the economy to help feed and house the Japanese people, supervise the continuing repatriation effort and execute missions and directives related to Japan's social, cultural and economic development. Significantly, the instructions stated:

"(6) Conduct occupation duties in such a manner that forces are prepared constantly:

(a) For combat.

(b) To quell any incipient disorders, riots or other disturbances or disputes.

(c) In the event of disaster in Japan to:

1. Preserve order.

2. Alleviate human suffering by providing emergency aid.

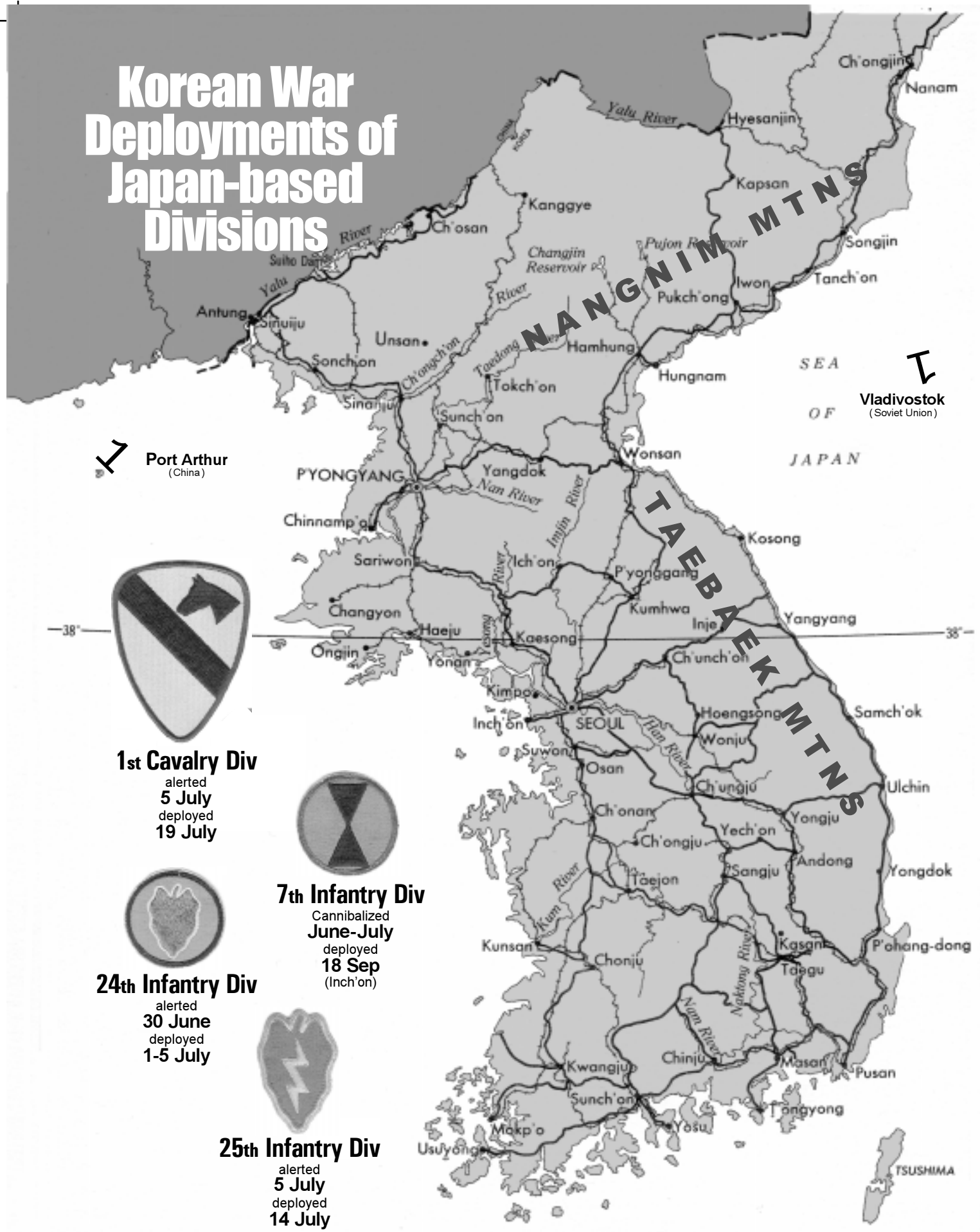
3. Extend assistance to the Japanese Government as directed.

4. Effect emergency rehabilitation of those Japanese installations."[19]

It is clear in communications from higher headquarters, fully eight months before the outbreak of hostilities on the Korean peninsula, that being prepared for combat was a stated mission subordinate units had to be prepared to conduct. Having said that, it is also clear that it was not designated a priority or singled out for special consideration. How was the 24th Infantry Division organized for the task and how prepared for combat was the unit? What was the status of the leadership and what was the morale of troops? One analyst asserts that "without exaggerating, it could be said that Eighth Army units were bordering on being unready for war."[20]

In early 1949, the 24th Infantry Division strength was about 10,700, well below the planned wartime strength of 18,900. None of the three infantry regiments, the 19th, the 21st and the 34th, had its full complement of three battalions. The 19th had only one battalion, a headquarters company and one company of a second battalion. The 21st had only one battalion and two headquarters companies. The 34th was in the best shape, organizationally, with three battalions less one company. The 52d Artillery was also understrength, and because of inadequate range facilities only fired once a year. Coupled with a high

Korean War Deployments of Japan-based Divisions



1st Cavalry Div
alerted
5 July
deployed
19 July

7th Infantry Div
Cannibalized
June-July
deployed
18 Sep
(Inch'on)

24th Infantry Div
alerted
30 June
deployed
1-5 July

25th Infantry Div
alerted
5 July
deployed
14 July

War in Korea, Presidio Press

Japanese soldiers bringing weapons to a US Army collection point in Yokohama.

Japanese fanaticism for working with the Americans and implementing the peace more than equaled their fanaticism for war. The discipline among the Japanese people and the American soldiers has been widely characterized as miraculous. The "miracle" was military leadership, planning and organization, coupled with a studied understanding of the Japanese.

turnover and continuing occupation duties that kept individuals away from training, the personnel status was troubling.

Perhaps more important than the personnel picture was the status of equipment. The units were equipped with World War II weapons. In addition, ammunition stocks were low, with only "thirteen high-explosive, antitank (HEAT) artillery rounds to be found in the division."[21] The crew-served weapon and vehicle situation was much the same. What the soldiers had was old and worn out, and maintenance was difficult with the shortage of parts. Critical for the upcoming battles in Korea, there were virtually no operational armored units in Japan and the available tanks were light, poorly maintained M-24s.

When Lieutenant General Walton E. Walker took over the Eighth Army in 1949, he emphasized training and immediately instituted a new training program. This program was just starting to have a positive effect when the war broke out. Units had conducted individual and crew training, but there were limited facilities for the firing of indirect-fire weapons, recoilless rifles and antitank weapons. This lack of tank-killing capability was a key shortcoming in the upcoming battle with the North Koreans. Additionally, battalions and larger units had no opportunity to train together and develop the necessary interoperability and combined arms expertise. This would also be a telling shortcoming for TF *Smith*.

Even so, "the greatest weakness of the American Army was not its weapons and equipment, pitiful as they were. The US Army, since 1945, had been civilianized at the insistence of the public. They wore uniforms, but they were civilians at heart."[22] The lifestyle of the officers and men of the occupation force reinforced a relaxed "colonial army" atmosphere. However, this is a contentious point; it does not appear that the Army's day-to-day regime in Japan was any more relaxed than

for units in the Continental United States.

Later actions by American troops no better trained or prepared, and from a similar relaxed, civilianized environment produced major victories in a few short months. Many of the officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) were veterans of World War II, and the United States still had a technically superior Air Force and Navy. These factors would help mitigate the initial shortfalls of the US Army on the peninsula. In the Gulf War many of the senior officers and NCOs were Vietnam War veterans, and the US and allied air and naval assets were again technically superior. It might be prudent to remember that after Inchon, it was not the North Korean Army that defeated the UN forces but a massive counteroffensive by a Chinese army.

The senior US officers in the chain of command, including MacArthur and even some of the troops themselves, had believed that when the NKPA realized the Americans were on the ground in Korea and moving in additional forces, the invasion would stop. Overconfidence, hope, underestimating the enemy and "arrogance" all appeared to play a role in the climate, morale and motivation among the leaders and the led in TF* Smith *— and their superiors.

It is also debated that the most important shortcoming was the attitude of the leadership, civilian and military, and even of the soldiers, that war was not possible, especially a ground war, in the Atomic Age. With communist-inspired or supported insurgencies in Greece, Vietnam and Malaya, the recent defeat of the US-supported Nationalists in 1949 in China, and the further Soviet consolidation of Eastern Europe in the late l940s, the warning signs appear, in hindsight, to have been quite obvious. Not everyone overlooked the warnings; "the best of the leaders—Walker, Stephens, the Regimental Commander and Smith—knew that war was possible and fought against the obstacles."[23] The failure was at the strategic level to get the Army's future tactical requirements "about right."

Task Force *Smith*

A veteran of the 7 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and now commander of the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment—the Gimlets—of the 24th Infantry Division, Smith had been catapulted into another war, a war he had not expected and one for which his unit was not fully prepared. Literally and symbolically, Smith was leading the United States in war for the second time in ten years.[24]

In a letter in response to a US Army Command and General Staff College student's query in 1992, retired Brigadier General Smith, for whom the task force was named, endorses as "factual and accurate" the accounts of Fehrenbach, Appleman and Eric Ludvigsen, who wrote an article published in *ARMY* magazine in February 1992.[25] These three sources are used extensively in the following brief account of the activities of the unit in Japan and its actions in Korea in July of 1950.

On 25 June 1950, the NKPA initiated a large-scale offensive operation against the Republic of Korea. Aside from some advisers serving in the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), there were few other American troops on the peninsula. The outgoing commander of KMAG, Brigadier General William L. Roberts, who was on his way back to the United States as the attack began, had been recently quoted in *Time* magazine: "The South Koreans have the best damn army outside of the United States."[26] The eight divisions of the Army of the Republic of Korea, without tanks and adequate artillery, and the US KMAG advisers were completely surprised by the attack and by 27 June resistance was breaking down everywhere. By the 28th, "only a rabble held the south shores of the Han."[28] On 30 June, based on a personal "on the ground" assessment by MacArthur followed by a request to use military power, President Harry S. Truman authorized the deployment of two Army divisions to Korea.[29]

Having been on alert since the 28th of June, "Task Force *Smith* was born in the late evening of 30 June.[30] Lieutenant Colonel Smith, the battalion commander of 1st of the 21st Infantry (1-21 Inf), the Gimlets, would lead the first US Army combat formation to Korea. Replacements were immediately moved to the understrength units and a mixed infantry-artillery task force of slightly more than 400 men was cobbled together out of other regimental and division assets. TF *Smith* prepared for movement to Korea to "stop the North Koreans as far from Pusan as possible."[30]

On 5 July, only five days after notification in Japan, TF *Smith* deployed in a delaying position south of Osan, Korea. With additional troops and volunteers, the task force now numbered 540 soldiers. Shortly after 0800 artillery and antitank teams of TF

War in Korea, Presidio Press

Replacements were immediately moved to the understrength units and a mixed infantry-artillery task force of slightly more than 400 men was cobbled together out of other regimental and division assets. TF* Smith *prepared for movement to Korea to "stop the North Koreans as far from Pusan as possible." On 5 July, only five days after notification in Japan, TF* Smith *deployed in a delaying position south of Osan, Korea.

Smith fired on advancing Soviet-supplied T-34 Korean tanks. However, the NKPA armored column moved through and Smith prepared his unit for the coming infantry assault. Low ammunition supplies, dud rounds and inadequate weapons—not failures in bravery, unit cohesion or leadership—were primarily responsible for only six tanks being destroyed or damaged out of the more than 30 engaged.

A follow-on enemy infantry column was sighted about an hour later and the task force took the enemy under fire when they came into range. However, by mid-afternoon the position was about to be flanked, and communications had been lost with the artillery unit to the rear. After repeated attempts to contact the artillery and believing it had been destroyed by the enemy tanks, Smith finally ordered a withdrawal. It was during this withdrawal under fire, a very difficult maneuver, that the unit broke up and took heavy casualties. Upon moving back, Smith found the artillery unit intact and together with its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Perry, the guns were rendered useless and the withdrawal completed. Even though North Koreans did not pursue the retreating Americans, about 180 US soldiers were killed, wounded or missing from TF *Smith* compared with 127 reported NKPA killed and wounded.[31] Nevertheless, the unit had slowed the North Korean advance.

The senior US officers in the chain of command, including MacArthur and even some of the troops themselves, believed that when the NKPA realized the Americans were on the ground in Korea and moving in additional forces, the invasion would stop.[32] Overconfidence, hope, underestimating the enemy and "arrogance" all appeared to play a role in the climate, morale and motivation among the leaders and the led in TF *Smith*—and their superiors. However, given the task, the mission and the odds, TF *Smith* deserves high marks for its performance.

While the TF might have done better, the other two regiments of the 24th Division were arguably much worse. However, the division continued to delay the NKPA, took significant losses (including the capture of its commander), and fought until relieved by the 1st Cavalry Division on 22 July.[33] The Pusan perimeter held and a successful counterattack occurred in early fall. The 24th Division, refitted and reinforced, distinguished itself in combat later in the war. Smith continued to command 1-21 Inf until November 1950.[34]

General Walker (left) meets 24th Infantry Division Commander Major General William F. Dean at an advance airfield in Korea and informs him that his division will soon be joined by the rest of Eighth Army, 7 July 1950. Dean was later captured during the defense of Taejon.

War in Korea, Presidio Press

When Lieutenant General Walton E. Walker took over the Eighth Army in 1949, he emphasized training and immediately instituted a new training program. This program was just starting to have a positive effect when the war broke out. Units had conducted individual and crew training, but there were limited facilities for the firing of indirect-fire weapons, recoilless rifles and antitank weapons. This lack of tank-killing capability was a key shortcoming in the upcoming battle with the North Koreans.

Considerations

Today we have fallen heir to the problems and responsibilities the Japanese had faced and borne in the Korean-Manchurian area for nearly a half century, and there is a certain perverse justice in the pain we are suffering from a burden which, when it was borne by others, we held is such low esteem. What is saddest of all is that the relationship between past and present seems to be visible to so few people. For if we are not to learn from our own mistakes, where shall we learn at all.[35]

At every level of the defense establishment between 1945 and 1950 errors of omission and commission led the DPRK to think it could attack and defeat a military supported by US advisers and logistics. The DPRK thought it could win before the might of the United States would or could be brought to bear against it. One obvious element in this equation was the need for MacArthur, his staff, the Eighth Army and its subordinate units to carry on with the vital strategic task of demilitarizing and democratizing Japan the, "most alien enemy the United States had ever fought in an all-out struggle."[36]

Half a century ago the US ignored a potential threat that still opposes us today. The Korean War is not over, and the United States is still taking casualties. This was America's first major UN operation, and since the end of the Cold War the number has increased many fold. An obvious question begs to be answered: Have we learned anything in the past fifty years?

The lessons from the occupation of Japan and of the tactical-level combat experience of TF *Smith* are often seen only as "a study of unpreparedness." More than that, this is a study in balancing the nation's objectives with its capabilities and willingness to use them. It is a study in decisions and plans made in ignorance of the history, the culture, the alien ideologies and the regional geopolitical situation. It is a study in reliance on the wrong technology or the right technology poorly integrated into the total military instrument of power and the arrogance of the success of the last fight. It is a study in how too many key leaders see the world as they wish it were and not as it really is.

One author describes the familiar "New World Landscape" of the post-Cold War environment," saying that trends suggest that conflict will be on the rise. But he points toward a different world in which nations are likely to be embattled from within and without.[37]

The occupation of Japan and the fate of TF *Smith* suggest that in the post-Cold War era we are looking in both the right and wrong places. Technology is only a partial answer to the problems in securing the nation's objectives in the 21st century. Regional expertise and planning, a better-integrated joint force, the ability to understand and evaluate the capabilities of, and work with allies and friends, and former enemies—these are also only partial solutions. The real solutions cannot be bought—they must be studied, practiced and earned.

Senior military leaders in Washington must educate executive, cabinet and legislative members and staffs with little or no military experience on the risks and pitfalls of decisions involving the use of military force across an increasing complex and varied spectrum. Our political leaders must fund the best balance of personnel, equipment, training and force structure to build the force and develop leaders who confidently and intelligently face the challenges of the future.

At the operational level, the theater commanders in chief—the MacArthurs of today—must anticipate, plan, balance and conduct military activities in war and operations other than war with the most efficient and effective joint, multinational and inter-

agency force mix, at the right time and place. This does not necessarily mean with overwhelming combat power, for what may seem most simple, in the long term could become most costly. The tragedy of US Air Force and Naval aviation assets mistakenly attacking US and ROK forces in the early days of the Korean conflict exacerbated the problems faced by the 24th Division. It is more than tragic that today we are still shooting at each other, figuratively and literally, and still do not have a joint team that can interoperate in truly seamless, efficient, multiservice operations.

At the tactical, TF *Smith* level, we argue that a disciplined soldier trained for his warfighting mission can do any "other than war" task assigned, in part because we prioritize training dollars, hours and facilities to practice for the fight-and-win mission. If that means we are only prepared to provide our nation with ad hoc SASO responses and settle for a loss or draw in situations like Rwanda, Somalia or Haiti, we are failing the nation. As for the Balkans, are we there to win the peace or just protect ourselves until ordered out? What would MacArthur do in Bosnia or Kosovo?

Luckily we did not lose Japan to save Korea.

The occupation of Japan and the fate of TF* Smith *suggest that in the post-Cold War era we are looking in both the right and the wrong places. Technology is only a partial answer to the problems in securing the nation's objectives into the 21st century. . . . If we are only prepared to provide our nation with ad hoc SASO responses and settle for a loss or draw in situations like Rwanda, Somalia or Haiti, we are failing the nation.

However, it certainly would have been better to win both the war and the peace—with fewer casualties. Building and keeping the peace, deterring war and if deterrence fails, winning the war are the demands of the National Military Strategy. National security requires shaping the Army's future leaders, force structure, equipment and training to meet all those demands. In the success of the Occupation of Japan and in the sacrifices of TF *Smith* there is much to be studied and learned that is directly applicable—tactically, operationally and strategically—for today's Army and the joint force. ***MR***

NOTES

1. Gordon R. Sullivan, "No More Task Force Smiths," interview by L. James Binder, *ARMY* (January 1992): 21.
2. Jim Tice, "Anybody Home?" *Army Times*, 17 April 1995,21.
3. Ibid., 2.
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